

ANNA BOLENA, MARIA STUARDA, AND ROBERTO DEVEREUX:

A STUDY OF GAETANO DONIZETTI'S DRAMATIC STYLE

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## INTRODUCTION

Until recently, Donizetti has not been a fashionable area for musicology. Because of the conditions and conventions of his time, Donizetti, along with Bellini, was pushed aside as a "routine" composer. Ferruccio Bonavia writes in the fifth edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians in the "Donizetti" article:

Traditional opinion assures us that, because Donizetti composed very rapidly, even allowing for the thinness and conventional character of the accompaniments, it is clear that such work can be no more than successful improvisation.<sup>1</sup>

(Exactly the same could be said of Messiah!)

Fortunately, Donizetti's music has been seen in new perspective in the past decades. Performers, audiences, and musicologists have examined more closely Donizetti's work and realized his great dramatic talent as an opera composer.

Although Donizetti was earlier remembered for two or three comic operas, he spent the majority of his mature compositional effort on serious operas. Of more than sixty-five completed operas, about one-half are serious. After 1828, a common drawing line for his mature style, Donizetti wrote twenty-nine full-length serious operas. Three of these serious operas are the attention of this study: Anna Bolena (1830), Maria Stuarda (1835), and Roberto Devereux (1837). In addition to Il Castello di Kenilworth (1829), these operas deal with the Tudor

dynasty, centering around Queen Elizabeth I. Although Donizetti intended no connection between the three operas under study, they are commonly referred to as the "Tudor Queen Trilogy."

The rigid conventions of early nineteenth-century Italian opera proved limiting for many composers' individual creative style. Study of Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, and Roberto Devereux reveals how Donizetti dealt with the operatic conventions and emerged with a highly dramatic style of his own.

#### Brief Biography

Donizetti was born 29 November 1797 in Bergamo, Italy, and baptized Domenico Gaetano Marta Donizetti. Coming from a poverty-stricken family of little musical background, Donizetti was fortunate to be accepted into the newly established Istituto Musicale of Bergamo in 1806, which was operated by the talented Austrian composer Johannes Simon Mayr. For the following eight years, Mayr cultivated young Donizetti into a promising composer. After two years' study of counterpoint in Bologna, Donizetti decided on his return to Bergamo in 1817 to become an opera composer.

Donizetti's first opera to be performed was Enrico di Borgogna (1818), but the opera that marks the true beginning of his career was Zorida di Granata (1822). Although these early works were commissioned by various theaters, by 1827 Donizetti was so well established with the Neapolitan audiences that impresario Domenico Barbaja offered him a three-year contract requiring four operas yearly to be performed at

the Teatro Nuovo, where Rossini had previously worked. The following year Donizetti married Virginia Vasselli (1808-1837).

By 1832, Donizetti was dissatisfied with the limitations of Naples. After breaking his extended contract, he was free to accept frequent contracts from other establishments. In 1835, Rossini invited him to compose an opera for the Théâtre-Italien of Paris. The moderate success of Marino Faliero was overshadowed by the great excitement caused by Bellini's I Puritani, which opened earlier. Donizetti's visit proved invaluable, despite the hampered success of his opera; the theatrical and musical excellence of Paris, coupled with the grand operas of Meyerbeer and Halévy, exposed him to the many possibilities of the operatic stage.

The three-month jaunt through Paris in 1835 was followed by the overwhelming enthusiasm created by his Lucia di Lammermoor in Naples. Finally, Donizetti's professional triumph of the operatic world in Italy was complete. Sadly, 1836 brought about personal tragedy--the deaths of his mother, father, and new-born child. As his popularity continued to soar, 1837 held more sorrow with the death of another infant in June and his young wife in July. After the disappointing attempt to gain the directorship of the Collegio Musica and censorship quarrels over Poliuto, Donizetti left again for Paris. This stay would be permanent.

The years in Paris were fruitful, as Donizetti composed new operas and reworked many Italian scores for French production. By 1844, his health had declined severely. In 1846, doctors concluded that Donizetti suffered from cerebro-spinal degeneration of syphilitic

origin. After spending approximately one year at a sanatorium outside of Paris, Donizetti, then paralyzed, was returned to Bergamo, where he died 8 April 1848 at the home of a friend.

#### Donizetti's Operatic World

Donizetti was born into an operatic world dominated by convention. Italian composers of the nineteenth century were forced to follow formulas standardized by Rossini, adhere to the singers' needs with their music, and compose rapidly, with the constant threat of rewriting on command. Basically, the composer had to place himself at the feet of the performing world and the public to begin a successful career.

The overwhelming career of Rossini influenced Italian opera with his compositional generalities which slowly became established convention. The public enjoyed Rossini's work to such an extent that all composers were expected to imitate him. Overtures were to contain an altered sonata form without a development section and a building climax into the final return of the second theme. Main characters should be introduced with a cabaletta; the act would then progress with a duet, trio, and finale. Fioratura writing and ornamentation were essential for the acceptance of singers and composers. The emphasis on the solo singer was still in full swing as in the Baroque opera seria. Special opening and closing numbers were expected for the prima role.

Besides formal conventions, composers had to meet the demands of performers. Singers were often hailed more than composers; Méric-Lalande received nine times more pay for her performance in the carnival season than Donizetti did for writing Lucrezia Borgia.<sup>2</sup>

Roles were constantly adapted for singers; the part of the heroine of Donizetti's first opera was rewritten from mezzo-soprano to soprano for the singer contracted for the part. Substitute arias, additional arias, and other changes were expected of the composer at a moment's notice.

Composing quickly and self-borrowing were two other strong conventions of nineteenth-century Italian opera composers. Early in his training, Donizetti learned from Mayr that there was no established repertoire of opera. Therefore, works needed to be written swiftly and for immediate success. The speed at which composers of this time wrote has brought them under criticism, as noted in the previously quoted Grove's article. These practices were so widely accepted that composers often prided themselves on the rapidity at which they worked. Donizetti's career spanned some twenty-five years, during which he wrote more than sixty-five operas, numerous revisions of works, substitute arias, and non-operatic works. (Averaging four operas yearly during the height of his career.) A nineteenth-century cartoonist portrayed Donizetti as simultaneously writing a serious opera with his left hand and a comic opera with his right.<sup>3</sup> Philip Gossett suggests two more hands could be added revising works.<sup>4</sup> The caption under the lithograph alludes to just a portion of the respect and amazement the French held for Donizetti:

Donizetti dont le brillant genie  
Nous a donné cent chefs d'oeuvres divers,  
N'aura bientôt qu'une patrie  
Et sera tout l'univers.

(Donizetti, whose brilliant genius has given us a hundred different masterpieces, will soon have only one native country and it will be the whole universe.)<sup>5</sup>

If an opera could not stand on its own or received poor support in the theater, it was often reworked into other scores. Because of the conventional forms of numbers, composers could easily replace arias, scenes, cabalettas, or entire acts of operas with those of others. When Donizetti faced problems with the censors concerning the libretto of Maria Stuarda, the music was adapted for a new text for its premiere. One small proviso that composers held to was that no borrowed music would premiere in a city where it had been previously heard. Donizetti once wittily used an aria from Elvida (1826) for a comic satire on an opera troupe, Le Convenienze (1827), for humorous effect. The character, Prima Donna, sang an entrance aria that was heard a year earlier in the same city.<sup>6</sup>

The deep-rooted conventions of opera in the early nineteenth century were loosened as changes in view occurred. The opera seria was eventually replaced by the bel canto melodrama. English history was a popular subject, with the influence of Scott's novels and the discovery that Queen Elizabeth I was a natural coloratura soprano.<sup>7</sup> The bel canto libretto emphasized tragic and bloody endings, reacting to the "happy endings" of earlier opera seria. The prima donna became the focal point; "in the age of bel canto a beautiful, miserable and lofty-minded heroine was as much as one could wish for in a title role."<sup>8</sup> In this arena, Donizetti developed his personal style.

Also during Donizetti's career came the growing importance of the composer, primarily because works gained more lasting popularity. Revivals of operas increased. (This trend began with revivals of Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia--the first opera to receive six



productions at La Scala.) Besides Rossini revivals, Bellini and Donizetti saw their works receive more productions. Composers needed to include more quality in a score, usually by taking more time.

Donizetti's successful career can, in part, be measured in terms of his lasting popularity through the nineteenth century in London, Paris, and all of Italy. A few works, Lucia di Lammermoor and Elisir d'amore, have remained in the repertoire through the present, while La fille du Regiment, Don Pasquale, and others receive more and more productions. Bergamo has devoted itself to reviving an unknown Donizetti opera yearly. The operas of discussion began to creep back into the repertoire after their revivals in Bergamo in the 1950's. These successful revivals lead to numerous productions that have contributed to the present "Donizetti revival." Performers like Maria Callas and Beverly Sills have introduced the famed "Donizetti queens" with dramatic excitement that has thrilled audiences in many major theaters of the world.

As enthusiasm for Donizetti's operas grew amongst performers and audiences, music scholars examined his work in new perspective. Herbert Weinstock provided one of the first authoritative biographies with information dealing with the operas and operatic world of Donizetti. The many articles and book by English scholar William Ashbrook further explore the individual operas and operatic world of Donizetti. Philip Gossett continues to contribute useful articles concerning the operas, the extremely valuable study of Anna Bolena, and the compositional process of Donizetti.

As in all research, new discoveries also reveal holes that exist in a given area. The present need for scholarly editions of the operas is apparent even during this study. The Gossett piano/vocal edition of Anna Bolena proves to be a reliable score, while only reprints of corrupt piano/vocal scores are available for the other operas of this study. Maria Stuarda is not owned by any publisher, since it has been out of print for such a great length of time. Kalmus supplies a full score of Anna Bolena, but without the newly discovered contributions of Gossett. Full scores of the others are only available for rent from Ricordi. The Donizetti manuscripts are held in the Naples Conservatory, the Ricordi Archives at Milan, the Paris Conservatoire, and his home/museum in Bergamo. Over one thousand letters have been published, in Italian, that could provide information for an interesting and helpful psychological study.

Nineteenth-century writers standardized terms about the operas of the time that concern this study. "Scena ed aria," "aria di sortita," "aria finale," "tempo di mezzo" and "cavatina" describe specific numbers in the context of the operas under study. "Scena ed aria" refers to a progression of recitative/arioso, aria, brief arioso section, and concluding cabaletta. The "aria di sortita" identifies the first scena ed aria, usually reserved for the main character, who often concluded the opera with the final scena ed aria, called the "aria finale." In "scena ed aria" and "scena e cavatina," Donizetti uses cavatina and aria nearly synonymously. Cavatinas are sometimes lighter in nature, but both cavatinas and arias end with cabalettas. The "tempo di mezzo" refers to the arioso section between the aria and cabaletta of a scena ed aria.

Unfortunately, as with all musical terms, there are exceptions to every term.

## ANNA BOLENA

### Historical Background

One of the most profoundly moving operatic experiences of my life, Anna Bolena suddenly showed me that Donizetti was a musicodramatic creator of far greater power and importance than any of my earlier contacts with others of his operas had led me to believe.<sup>9</sup>

writes Weinstock in his preface to his Donizetti monograph of 1963. Weinstock goes on to cite this experience as his reason for writing the book. The importance of Anna Bolena to Donizetti's career is unmeasurable. At first, Donizetti was considered one of the leading opera composers of his time on a more international scope. This opera marks the culmination of his early work; his best opera to 1830. Mayr is said to have called Donizetti "maestro" only after Anna Bolena.

While Imelda de' Lambertazzi was in rehearsal, during the summer of 1830, Donizetti signed a contract with the Teatro Carcano in Milan for an opera to open their carnival season. (The Teatro Carcano was organized by a group of amateurs determined to offer an outstanding season of opera comparable to that of La Scala's.) On receiving the completed libretto 10 November 1830, Donizetti quickly composed the opera. The majority of the music was written at the villa of Giuditta Pasta (1798-1865) on Lake Como. Pasta, for whom the role was written, undoubtedly contributed to the work. Donizetti revised some of Anna's

music during his stay with Pasta; the autograph shows ornamentation added.

Although Pasta's voice was not extremely controlled, her dramatic ability was said to be entrancing, "...penetrating expression of her singing made even the severest of critics forget any faults of production."<sup>10</sup> Pasta was a diligent studier, whose career reflected her devotion. Bellini created Norma and Sonnambula for her. Pasta's experience as a performer surely influenced Donizetti's score.

Donizetti completed the score for rehearsals by 10 December. The one month spent composing was swift but not easy; the autograph reveals extensive revisions. It was important that Anna Bolena score success, especially in Milan. Donizetti's earlier Milan opera, Chiara e Serafina (1822) was so poor the audience became hostile. Donizetti suffered convulsions after the bad reception.

After the great enthusiasm of the premiere of Anna Bolena on 26 December, Donizetti allowed it to be performed for nearly one month before withdrawing it for revisions in January. These revisions involved reworking Percy's cabaletta in Act I, the cabaletta of the trio in Act II, and numerous deletions ranging from single measures to entire musical periods. By deleting measures and altering (most often shortening) cabalettas, Donizetti pushed the drama of the opera forward more quickly.

The suggestion that Anna Bolena represents the culmination of Donizetti's compositional style to 1830 is supported by the amount of self-borrowing from earlier works. In most cases, Donizetti reworked the borrowed material from Imelda di Lambertazzi (1830), I Paria

(1829), Otto mesi due ore (1827), Gabriella di Vergy (1826), and Enrico di Borgogna (1818).<sup>11</sup> The gift for melody, harmony, and structure are apparent even in the earliest works; in Anna Bolena Donizetti draws from the stronger points of these earlier operas.

Felice Romani (1788-1865), the most famous librettist of his time, provided the text for Anna Bolena. It was Romani who found the story and suggested it to Donizetti. Instead of Shakespeare or historical happenings, Romani drew upon two recent plays for his libretto: Marie-Joseph de Chénier's Henri VIII (1791) in an Italian translation by Ippolito Pindemonte, and Alessandro Pepoli's Anna Bolena (1788).<sup>12</sup> The story focuses on the plight of Anne Boleyn, second wife of King Henry VIII, and the intrigue which leads to her beheading. Romani's text supplied Donizetti with the intense emotions of romance, betrayal, and suffering, all of which sparked Donizetti's creative genius best.

The cast of characters for Anna Bolena:

Enrico VIII, King of England	Bass
Anna Bolena, his wife	Soprano
Giovanna Seymour, Anna's Lady-in-waiting	Mezzo-soprano
Lord Rochefort, Anna's brother	Bass
Lord Riccardo Percy	Tenor
Smeton, Page and musician to the Queen	Contralto
Sir Hervey, Officer of the King	Tenor
Chorus of courtesans, officials, lords, hunters, and soldiers.	

The synopsis of Anna Bolena by the Earl of Harewood is concisely recounted in Kobbe's Opera Book:

The first scene of the opera shows the great staircase at Windsor Castle, where a crowd of courtiers discuss the King's growing love for Jane Seymour [Giovanna], who presently appears, troubled that the Queen should show such solitude to one whom she does not recognize as her

rival...The Queen enters, full of sad forebodings...She and the court withdraw. Jane Seymour alone gives voice to her anxiety, but the appearance of the King and his ardent wooing soon remove her doubts...the King reveals that he intends to expose the unfaithfulness of his wife and marry Jane.

A courtyard in the castle. The Queen's brother, Rochefort, is astonished to see Percy, whom the King has recalled from exile in hope that he will provide the evidence against the Queen. Percy admits that the love he felt for Anne as a girl is not dead even though she is now Queen. Preparations are made for the Court to go hunting, and when the King and Queen appear, Percy's hopes are encouraged by the Queen's confusion...The King instructs Hervey to watch Percy's behavior with the Queen, Rochefort laments Percy's lack of discretion, and the courtiers are filled with apprehension at the new turn of events.

...In a corridor leading to the Queen's private apartments, Smeton is gazing enraptured at a miniature of the Queen...He hides when the Queen comes into view with her brother, who is trying to persuade her to grant audience to Percy. When Percy appears, the Queen remains adamant: she is a wife and a Queen and will not listen to his protestations...the Queen refuses to see him again and Percy draws his sword to kill himself, only for Smeton to rush from his hiding place. The Queen faints as Rochefort runs to warn her that the King is on his way, and Henry arrives to catch her in what he purports to find a compromising situation...Smeton's protestation of her innocence is rendered less credible by the discovery of the portrait he wears around his neck...the King...condemns the conspirators to separate cells and orders the Queen to make her defense before the judges, not to him...

...a vestibule before the Council Chamber, where Hervey tells the assembled courtiers that Smeton has confessed and implicated the Queen. The King passes through and the Queen proudly refutes the accusations...at the same time admitting that before becoming Queen she had loved Percy. The King's rage and determination to be revenged, Percy's ecstatic proclamation of his love, the Queen's regret...are combined...as the Queen and Percy are led off...Jane Seymour herself comes to intercede for the unfortunate Queen she both loves and rivals. Her plea avails nothing since Hervey comes to announce the Council's unanimous sentence of death on the Queen and her accomplices.

In the Tower of London lie the conspirators. When Hervey comes to convey the King's clemency to Percy and Rochefort, each indignantly refuses to live while the guiltless Anne [Anna] must die.

In the Tower of London the Queen waits for death. She has lost her senses and chides her ladies for weeping on her wedding day when the King awaits her. Her mood shifts from terror to joy and...she thinks she sees Percy smile at her... Hervey comes to order the Queen and the three condemned with her to proceed to the scaffold...Anne again loses her reason, orders Smeton to tune his harp and sing to her, then intones a prayer...The firing of the cannon and ringing of bells are heard acclaiming the new Queen, and the opera ends with an impassioned outburst of denunciation from Anne Boleyn.<sup>13</sup>

The formal numbers of Anna Bolena:

1. Sinfonia	DM
-Act I-	
2. Introduzione (Chorus)	E-flat M
3. Sortita (Giovanna)	A-flat M
4. Scena e romanze (Smeton)	E-flat M
5. Cavatina (Anna)	E-flat M
6. Scena e duetto (Giovanna/Enrico)	DM
7. Scena e cavatina (Percy)	B-flat M; E-flat M*
8. Scena e quintetto	CM
9. Scena e cavatina (Smeton)	A-flat M
10. Scena e duetto (Anna/Percy)	B-flat M
11. Finale primo	DM
-Act II-	
12. Introduzione (Chorus)	GM-AM
13. Scena e duetto (Anna/Giovanna)	CM
14. Coro (Chorus)	E-flat M
15. Scena e terzetto (Anna/Percy/Enrico)	CM
16. Scena ed aria (Giovanna)	EM
17. Recitativo, Scena ed aria (Percy)	AM**
18. Coro (Chorus)	Fm
19. Scena ed aria finale (Anna)	FM; GM: A-flat M; E-flat M

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\*B-flat M; CM in the published score.

\*\*GM in the published score.

Anna Bolena is divided into two acts, as was customary for opera seria to 1830. In the course of the first act, the characters are introduced, and Enrico's trap for Anna proves successful. The reactions and emotions of the characters are developed throughout Act II



to the final outcome. Giovanna, Smeton, and Percy are given the typical two scena ed arias each (Nos. 3, 16, 4, 9, 7, 17 respectively), while Anna and Enrico are treated somewhat differently for main characters. Anna does not sing the aria di sortita, but does sing the aria finale. The first dramatic scene of the opera is expanded to accommodate the first aria for Giovanna (No. 3), and aria for Smeton (No. 4), and a complete scena ed aria for Anna (No. 5), which ends the first scene. Donizetti extends this scene to build anticipation and focus on Anna, since all talk is about Anna from the opening chorus. The character Enrico has no arias, but long ariosos to develop his evil character. Donizetti includes Enrico in ensembles to further develop the character.

The ensemble numbers of Anna Bolena provide the highest dramatic points of the opera. The Giovanna/Enrico duet (No. 6), the Anna/Percy duet (No. 10), and the Anna/Giovanna duet (No. 13) reveal important turns in the dramatic action. Giovanna is horrified when she discovers the true ugly nature of Enrico as he pledges to destroy Anna and replace her with Giovanna. The Anna/Percy duet is more conventional as a love duet, but Anna's innocence and the previous romance are made known. The arioso following this duet includes the successful trap of Enrico. The final duet is the finest, as Anna learns through Giovanna's painful disclosure that her rival is Giovanna.

Besides the dramatic duets, Donizetti provides important dramatic events in other ensembles. In the quintet (No. 8), the feelings of Anna and Percy are all but spoken aloud, supplying ample bait for Enrico's trap. During the trio (No. 15), Anna's anger erupts into insults at Enrico, and Percy divulges his previous romance with Anna. Donizetti

obviously saw more dramatic possibilities in ensembles than solo numbers.

#### Musical Numbers

Sinfonia (No. 1). The Overture begins with an Allegro-Larghetto introduction followed by an Allegro section which closely imitates the Rossinian design. Instead of a recapitulation of the first theme, Donizetti uses the first theme material for a quasi-development section. The crescendo theme is related to the first theme and recurs later in the opera, in the tempo di mezzo of Giovanna's aria (No. 16). A small phrase of the second theme recurs in the recitative of the aria finale (No. 19) when Anna recalls her past happiness with Percy. The first theme of the overture is closely related to introductions of various numbers, especially the scena e duetto for Anna and Percy (No. 10). These recurring themes are too minimal and brief for significance, but do provide a more cohesive structure for the entire opera. Donizetti did not use them as leitmotives or reminiscent themes, but simple motives he remembered from the opera as he composed the overture.

Introduzione (No. 2). The original introduzione was Rossinian in structure, but Donizetti made massive cuts in it during the revision of January 1831; nearly two-thirds of the number, primarily the middle section and repeats, were discarded. The men's chorus begins as an arioso dialogue over a melody in the orchestra and ends with choral statements about Anna's situation. The revision moves the large introductory scene, which stretches to Anna's cavatina (No. 5), forward without tiresome repetitions.

Sortita (No. 3). Giovanna immediately enters, and, without an introduction, airs her guilt. Although her lyric aria is in A-flat major, Donizetti creates a minor-mode effect by using a lowered seventh scale degree, many subdominant chords, and minor dominant chords. The conjunct nature of the melody is interrupted by Giovanna's desire to make her love for Enrico "leave her heart" with large leaps at the repetitions of "in sen" ("in breast").

Scene e romanza (No. 4). Anna enters with a brief, but majestic dotted-rhythm introduction. During her recitative, tremolo strings and diminished seventh chords prelude her disturbed state. Instead of continuing with an aria for Anna, Donizetti introduces Smeton, who sings an aria to cheer Anna. Dramatically, this is a fine effect, for it brings Anna into the action subtly and provides reason for her aria which follows.

Smeton's romanza is a simple strophic song in which Donizetti uses primarily tonic and dominant harmonies and very little chromaticism. (This aria is easily paralleled with Cherubino singing to the Countess in Marriage of Figaro.) As the third verse begins "Quel primo amor che..." ("That first love who..."), Anna is overcome and interrupts with emphatic repetitions of "taci" ("silent"), accompanied skillfully with subito forte, diminished seventh chords played tremolo. Since her unrest would not leave time for a full orchestral introduction, Donizetti cut the original introduction to one measure for the moving aria "Come, innocente giovane." This dramatic interruption into the aria was added by Donizetti; no incipit for a third verse for Smeton

appears in the original libretto. An extremely well-done dramatic touch was contributed by Donizetti.

Interesting revisions of this aria are seen in the autograph. Donizetti creatively alters lines to enhance the melodic line by making it more disjunct and widening the range. These changes reflect the dramatic mind that made them:

Larghetto original

(Come innocente gio-va-ne, co-me n'ahi scosso il

co-----re! Son cal--de an-cor le

Anna's cabaletta is a brilliant showpiece sung to Giovanna. Again, changes are found in the autograph that improve already lovely lines:

revision

original

-gar.....non la-

The reprise of the cabaletta is an exact repeat; Donizetti probably worked out ornamentations with Pasta without including them in the score.

Scena e duetto (No. 6). The constant pulsing of eighth notes and sixteenth notes represent the anxiety of the duet. Giovanna enters with a recitative and is joined by Enrico. During the arioso, Giovanna's "ultimo" ("final") is emphasized with a higher note in her register and a longer rhythmic value. "Fama" ("reputation") stands out because of its high pitch and sudden rapid descending scale with a fermata over the rest while Enrico ponders. Giovanna's musical motives at the repeats of "giammai" are the same as Enrico's motives at "la terra," showing her persistence at getting his attention. Enrico's aria is repeated and varied by Giovanna. Another aria follows, using material from the earlier arias. The tempo di mezzo begins as Giovanna cries. Giovanna then sings the cabaletta theme and is joined by Enrico. An unusual musical quote appears in Giovanna's line during her cadential "ah più rimorsi" ("ah for pity's sake"), which is repeated one step higher from the preceding duet at "di un ripudio avrò la pena" ("I will have the pain of rejection"). These lines both occur at repeated cadences, and could accent Giovanna's fear of the future.

Scena e cavatina (No. 7). Rochefort and Percy grieve for Anna during the recitative of this conventional heroic number. Donizetti fills the aria for Percy with lyric sadness, usually by means of melodic chromaticism. The descending chromatic scale on the word "tomba" ("tomb"), marked piano and beginning high in the voice, is particularly sentimental. After another verse of the aria, the mood is changed at the tempo di mezzo with a new meter, faster tempo, and rhythmic bounce. The cavatina contains characteristics that must have

been strengths in Rubini's vocal technique. In this cavatina and Percy's other cabaletta (No. 17), Donizetti writes various trills and sixteenth notes in descending patterns. The five high d'''s (according to pitch scheme No. 1 in the New Harvard Dictionary of Music) were definitely included for Rubini; in the published scores, Donizetti had this number transposed down a step.

Scena e quintetto (No. 8). Without introduction, Enrico and Anna begin the recitative before the quintet. After Percy enters, Enrico's distrust is felt in the orchestra's tremolos and diminished chords as he sings "dell' innocenza vostra" ("of your innocence"). A long arioso section builds to where Percy kneels to Anna, who becomes visibly moved in the presence of everyone. Anna then starts the quintet with two phrases which are repeated at the dominant by Enrico. All voices enter, stating the main melodic theme as they verbalize their various feelings. Enrico falsely pardons Percy in the following arioso. The final Allegro has no reprise, to avoid dramatic and musical redundancy.

Scena e cavatina (No. 9). The long introduction accompanying Smeton as he secretly enters the room adjoining Anna's apartments allows the dramatic flow to slow after the intense Quintet. This conventional number features Smeton's adolescent infatuation for Anna, but includes a more complicated aria than before, utilizing advanced harmony and melodic chromaticism. Donizetti attaches a short recitative to the end of the cabaletta as Smeton hears someone approaching and hides.

Scena e duetto (No. 10). After a long introduction, which appears in the first theme of the Overture, Anna and Rochefort enter as she

cries "cessa" ("stop"). Her persistence is heard as the notes rise:



At Percy's arrival, anticipation is represented in the orchestra with grace notes that accent the leading tone. Percy proclaims the line "sien brevi i detti nostri cauti" ("let our words be brief, guarded, hushed") on a single note to emphasize their importance and maintain Anna's attention. The following arioso consists of irregular phrases, describing Percy's lofty thoughts of love. The most beautiful line translates "you are my Anna, my only Anna,":



Anna's fear of the situation is heard in her short, recitative lines.

Anna's repetition of Percy's aria is different in music and text, but the calm tempo and serene melody put her more at ease. During the tempo di mezzo, Anna stresses the gloom of the text "in Inghilterra non ti trovi il nuovo albor" ("in England you will not see another dawn") as it lies low in the voice and is therefore darker in tone. Anna sings the first statement of the cabaletta, followed by Percy's ornamented version which includes higher notes. (Perhaps Donizetti was more impressed with Rubini's high range than Pasta's, for her statement could have been changed.)

The recitative/arioso section after the duet features Anna singing high a"-flat at "mai più" ("never again"). Percy threatens to kill himself as he sings a long declaimed line on high a'-flat to prove he is as serious as Anna. When Smeton rushes out and Anna swoons, the orchestra plays sweeping sixteenth notes to illustrate her dizziness.

The aria Anna sings after she regains consciousness is touching, with dramatic changes in register. A stunning example is the low placement of "sospetto" ("suspicion"), followed by the next line one octave higher. Enrico effectively interrupts her final cadence, explaining that she would be better off dead. Disjunct recitative lines over tremolo strings contribute to his eerie text. During the sextet, each character expresses his reaction to the situation with discriminating lines.

Finale secondo (No. 11). In the arioso section, Enrico quickly orders the conspirators to separate cells. After Anna retorts, she bursts into the cabaletta which launches the sextet. Donizetti incorporates a driving, well-accented rhythm in the quasi-choral style of this finale. Percy and Anna are heard over the ensemble, as they sing a distinct melody in octaves. Enrico exits after the first statement, providing Anna with the anger to begin the cabaletta once more.

Introduzione (No. 12). A customary chorus opens Act II. The ladies-in-waiting sing two full statements to mourn for Anna. Between statements, Anna enters to sing a recitative dialogue with the chorus.

Scena e duetto (No. 13). Besides the final scene, this duet is the most dramatic number of the opera. Donizetti effectively sets






character, Donizetti alternates lines of each stanza, acting as the first statement of the cabaletta. Having both women react simultaneously seems more realistic than the conventional cabaletta form. The last statement is sung in the same manner, and the voices finally join for the ending cadences.

Coro (No. 14). Again, a long introduction provides time for the dramatic intensity to relax after the previous highly moving scene. Donizetti revised this chorus in January 1831, making cuts nearly as significant as in the opening *Introduzione* (No. 2).

*Scena e terzetto* (No. 15). The smooth character of Enrico's melody seems to disagree with his opening evil text in the recitative/arioso section of the trio. As Anna passes by and demands Enrico's audience, she powerfully sings "rispetti" ("respect") to him, beginning on high g" and rapidly descending a tenth to e'-flat. Anna's anger mounts as Enrico interrupts Percy's following arioso, and Anna quiets him with accompanied recitative repetitions of "cessa" ("silent"), which move higher at each repetition. Unaccompanied, Anna then accuses Enrico of seducing Smeton. Percy follows with an aria similar to Anna's earlier aria; the great descending scale begins on a' and ends on f. Enrico sings his variation of the same aria, ending with a descending scale from d' to B. These ending figures expresses the perseverance of each character's dramatic statement.

During more arioso, Percy declaims "sposi noi siamo" ("we are married") without accompaniment, stressing the new dramatic discovery. The trio then commences with Percy, followed by Anna, and finally Enrico. Anna and Percy sing together most often, despite their

varying texts. Enrico sings many coloratura passages before he sends for the guards.

As Anna notices Enrico's anger rising, she sings her line with octave jumps to tantalize him and express her own fear. Enrico then condemns them with the declamation "coppia rea" ("guilty couple") on a-flat that lasts nearly three measures. Donizetti's characteristic driving cabaletta rhythm, , is used as Enrico explodes into the cabaletta. The second statement bonds Anna and Percy as they sing the same melody and text. The reprise includes all three voices.

Scena ed aria (No. 16). Enrico's arioso which opens this number seems superfluous both dramatically and musically. His text describes anger and astonishment, while the music evokes a pathetic tone, with its sweet, melody and simple harmony. In Giovanna's aria which follows, she grieves for Anna; the dramatically extreme vocal ranges spans from high a" to low a-sharp within one measure. Rapid coloratura represents her unsteadiness, and a long cadenza at the end emphasizes her line "non mi far di dib" ("do not make me guiltier").

In the tempo di mezzo, Hervey enters to announce that Anna is sentenced to death. His line is clearly understood, declaimed on a single pitch while the orchestra rests. Giovanna pleads with Enrico to reconsider, singing wide intervals to accentuate her wish. She then starts the cabaletta. After her first statement, Enrico orders her to leave, but she remains for the shortened reprise of the cabaletta.

Recitative, Scena ed aria (No. 17). This scene is compositionally conventional, but dramatically necessary to reveal the noble intentions

of Percy and Rochefort. The information could have been set as an arioso, but the *Scena ed aria* provides another scene for the tenor. This scene is similar to Percy's earlier number (No. 7), with related lines and the same difficult figurations as previously discussed. Donizetti writes this number too high for most tenors; it is transposed down one step for the published edition.

Coro (No. 18). The Coro serves as the introduction to the lengthy final scene. This women's chorus consists of two like statements, separated by a brief arioso. The picardy third at the end supplies a subtle transition to the next number.

*Scena ed aria finale* (No. 19). This complex scene for Anna is made up of recitative statements with interludes, a lyric arioso, an aria, an extended tempo di mezzo, an aria with choir, a short arioso, and the concluding cabaletta. Donizetti masterfully moves the scene along, as Anna drifts from reality and back, with changes of tempo, mode, and meter.

An oboe sets the melancholy mood during the introduction. Each recitative phrase of Anna's is set differently, to reflect her changing thoughts. Her emotion is felt as her melody builds to high c", then descends one octave and a fifth when she describes the flowers on the altar at her wedding to Enrico. After comments from the chorus, Donizetti includes a motive that he will use later in Lucia's mad scene.

Anna fears Percy's rejection, singing an accompanied recitative which climaxes in the exposed, unaccompanied line "ah! mi perdona, mi perdona" ("ah! forgive me, forgive me"). A full orchestral introduction

precedes the aria in which Donizetti incorporates the melody of "Home, sweet home." The cadenza ending the aria encompasses two octaves. Anna is shaken into reality with the sound of drums, signifying the execution march. During the arioso of the tempo di mezzo, the conspirators melodramatically blame themselves for Anna's plight, as her mind slips from reality again. Her prayer-like aria ends, followed immediately by boisterous cannon bursts and the celebration band of the King's marriage to Giovanna. (Verdi later utilized stage bands of this kind.) In a short arioso, Anna regains her senses, singing "manca solo e versato sar " ("the only thing lacking to complete the crime is Anna's blood, and it will be shed").

Only two measures introduce the cabaletta, in order to keep the drama moving. Accents on the upbeat, extreme register changes, and occasional declaimed lines give the cabaletta power and drive. The reprise includes some dramatic alterations, as seen in the opening phrase:

Cabaletta theme:



Reprise:



## MARIA STUARDA

### Historical Background

During the 1830's, the Neapolitan censors began acting against bloody and violent subjects as being disruptive of public morale and tranquility. At the same time, Donizetti's passion for powerful and dynamic subjects grew stronger. These tendencies collided in Maria Stuarda. The controversy and banning of the opera attached to it a stigma that survived more than half a century.

After spending time in the north, where audiences accepted melodrama and violence well, Donizetti returned to Naples to begin composing his next opera for the Teatro San Carlo. He chose the subject of Mary, the Queen of Scotland, after seeing Schiller's play. Donizetti preferred Mafei's translation to the more traditional Alfieri translation of 1778, which focused more on the political and nationalistic aspects. Because of the tastes of the north, opposition from the censors was never suspected.

Donizetti hoped to begin work by 6 July 1834, but the librettist, Romani, had retired. Donizetti was forced to find his own librettist, the seventeen-year-old Giuseppe Bardari (1817-1861). Bardari was relatively inexperienced, but dramatically vivid. Donizetti surely helped with the libretto, having created three of his own and always working closely with earlier librettists.

By 19 July, the libretto was completed and sent to the censors. Donizetti quickly composed the score for rehearsals in late August. On 4 September, Bardari was notified of the changes the censors demanded: the scene where Maria calls Elisabetta a vile bastard and the confession scene. As time passed, the censors seemed to find more in question about the libretto. In addition, rumors spread of the opera. While in rehearsal, the two women portraying the leads became so emotionally involved in the confrontation scene that a fight broke out. The King eventually heard the various rumors and incidents, and banned the opera after one successful dress rehearsal.

Since Naples was in need of the income a Donizetti opera would supply, another text was sought out to fit the music. The first two librettos found by Donizetti were denied by the censors. At last, Buodelmonte was accepted; it opened 18 October 1834 with mild success. More information concerning the transformation of Maria Stuarda into Buodelmonte is available in the Patric Schmid article in Opera, 24 (1973).

The uproar of Maria Stuarda rested for nine months, until September 1835, when the popular mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran insisted upon performing Maria in Milan at La Scala. Malibran had seen the score and delighted in the sensationalism; her desire drove her to turn down a special version of Elvira for her by Bellini in I Puritani. Maria Stuarda was approved and would open the season. The censors in Milan were more open-minded than those in Naples, but they did insist on slight text alterations.

The necessary changes in libretto were made, but rehearsals were disturbing. In December, the roles of Elisabetta and Anna were unfilled. Sofia Dall'Oca-Schoberlechner refused the role of Elisabetta as too insignificant; the last-minute replacement was Giacinto Puzzi-Toso. The part of Anna was finally assigned to Teresa Moja. Unfortunately, Malibran became ill in December and refused to relax and convalesce. The complications lead to the postponing of the opera; I Puritani opened the season and was a great success.

Maria Stuarda finally premiered 30 December 1835. Malibran, still not in good voice, relied on her popularity for the approval of the audience and the censors. (In all her excitement, she sang the original words, including "vil bastarda.") By 3 January 1836, only Act I was allowed performance. After complete performances on January 10 and 12, the opera was banned in Milan. Reportedly, the audience "grew pale and trembled at the terrible 'bastarda,'" during the confrontation scene. Rumors circulated that the Queen fainted when she heard the line sung.<sup>14</sup> The fiasco of Maria Stuarda took its toll on Donizetti's career in Milan; no work by him would open their carnival season for six years. The opera saw few performances to 1866 in various versions until its revival in Bergamo in 1958.

The importance of Maria Stuarda lies in the characteristic tendencies Donizetti uses in the score. Although a good portion of this work is conventional and routine for Donizetti, dramatic development between two powerful figures, extension of arioso material, and melodramatic emotion are all incorporated. The focus on Maria, however sometimes weak, seems to bind the opera together, as Gary Schmidgall explains:



If there is a key to the essence of Maria Stuarda's bel canto nature, it is in Schiller's observation that Mary 'feels or excites no tenderness; her destiny is only to experience herself and inflame others with vehement passion.' Donizetti's heroine accomplishes this with the aid of music. All her emotions--vindictive jealousy, sympathetic devotion, noble sufferance--are the staple of bel canto, and Donizetti set them to music with an easy mastery.<sup>15</sup>

The weakest element of the libretto is the extra attention given to Elisabetta. Although Maria is the subject of Act I, Elisabetta dominates the act; Maria does not enter the opera until Act II. Schmidgall compares the dramatic focus of the Schiller play and the Bardari libretto:<sup>16</sup>

<u>Play focus</u>	<u>Libretto focus</u>
Act I - Maria	Act I - Elisabetta
Act II - Elisabetta	Act II - Maria, Confrontation
Act III - Confrontation	Act III - Elisabetta, Maria
Act IV - Elisabetta	
Act V - Maria	

Besides the final scene, which is devoted to Maria, both Maria and Elisabetta have nearly the same amount of numbers in the opera. Unfortunately, the attention on Elisabetta causes the drama to sag and confusion as to who the main character is. The weakness of Elisabetta as a character is her predictability and lack of change. Throughout the opera, Elisabetta hates Maria and seeks an excuse to destroy her; she expresses these emotions in every number she sings. Bardari should have reduced the numbers including Elisabetta so as to present Maria as the primary character. On the contrary, Bardari included Elisabetta in many numbers. Donizetti cut the lengthy monologue intended for her in Act III.

Donizetti obviously realized the unbalanced dramatic situation and often opted to replace the Trio of Act III with an arioso. He was also known to combine the first two acts as one, while the third act stood alone, resulting in a two-act opera.<sup>17</sup> Since the first two acts are rather short, this creates a better balance musically and dramatically.

It seems as if Donizetti never had opportunity to revise Maria Stuarda as he did Anna Bolena. The melodies are beautiful bel canto, the numbers well-organized, and the orchestration effective, but the nuance of slight variation is missing. The revisions in Anna Bolena seen in the autograph add a truly creative element to the score. It is this author's assumption that Donizetti never returned to Maria Stuarda with the same advanced creativity as he did Anna Bolena. Perhaps there was no opportunity, or the controversy over Maria Stuarda left him tired of the work. Nonetheless, the opera represents Donizetti's beautiful lyricism and dramatic touch.

The cast of characters for Maria Stuarda:

Elisabetta, Queen of England	Soprano
Maria, Queen of Scots	Soprano
Earl of Leicester	Tenor
Cecil	Bass
Talbot	Baritone
Anna	Mezzo-soprano
Lords, ladies and attendants of Queen Elisabetta's court, courtiers, guards, huntsmen, servants of Maria, sheriff and his officers.	

The synopsis of Maria Stuarda by the Earl of Harewood is concisely recounted in Kobbe's Opera Book:

In the Palace of Westminster, courtiers await with some excitement the arrival of Queen Elizabeth [Elisabetta], rumoured to be about to unite by marriage the thrones of England and France. The Queen, however, has inclinations towards another and less exalted man...The court and Talbot urge clemency in her dealings with her cousin Mary Stuart [Maria]. Cecil reminds her of the untrustworthiness of her rival...When Leicester enters, she appoints him her ambassador to France, notices his reluctance to accept, raises suspicion in the minds of the bystanders that this may be the man whom she secretly loves, and leaves the stage. Talbot reveals to Leicester that he has been to Fotheringay and that Mary...has asked by letter for Leicester's help in her predicament. Leicester...longs to free her but promises Talbot not further to jeopardize her safety...When the Queen returns and demands to see the letter he is holding, she realizes from it that Mary has at one time or another had designs both on the throne which she herself occupies and the man whom she at present favours...Leicester pleads successfully that the Queen agree to visit Mary in prison...

In the Park at Fotheringay, Mary recalls...far-off days of her happy life at the French court...Her reminiscences turn to agitation at the approach of the Queen's hunting party...Leicester is first on the scene, to counsel her to adopt a submissive attitude towards Elizabeth, to swear himself to exact vengeance if the Queen remain obdurate, and...to ask for Mary's hand in marriage. When Elizabeth appears, she brings with her an atmosphere of suspicion (egged by Cecil), mistrust (because of her doubts of Leicester's motives), and apprehension...The confrontation is preceded by one of those moments of frozen drama...Mary forces herself to kneel before her cousin and beg for forgiveness, only to hear herself accused of treachery and in effect of murdering her husband...In furious reaction, she insults the Queen...Her cause is all too evidently lost as the Queen summons the guards...condemning her rival and cousin to death.

...at the Palace of Westminster...Queen Elizabeth waits to sign the death warrant...The appearance of Leicester, whom she suspects of an amorous involvement with her cousin, and the persistent promptings of Cecil combine to resolve her doubts and she signs...she orders Leicester to witness the execution. At Fotheringay, Mary hears of the sentence from Cecil and is offered and refuses the services of an Anglican priest...In a room next to the scene of the impending execution, Mary's supporters protest what they think of as a crime against an innocent woman...[Maria] enters, sees them for the first time since her condemnation and prays calmly and movingly to God...We hear the first of three cannon shots which are to announce

the moment of the execution, and Cecil brings the Queen's offer of a last wish...the appearance of the distraught Leicester and the sound of the second cannon shot precipitate a last protest of innocence...The third cannon shot sounds and Mary walks upright and dignified to her death.<sup>18</sup>

The formal numbers of Maria Stuarda:

1. Overture	A-flat M
2. Preludio	Cm
-Act I-	
3. Coro	B-flat M
4. Scena e cavatina (Elisabetta)	GM
5. Scena	
6. Scena e cavatina (Leicester)	CM
7. Scena e duetto (Elisabetta/Leicester)	EM
-Act II-	
8. Scena e cavatina (Maria)	B-flat M
9. Scena e duetto (Maria/Leicester)	D-flat M
10. Scena	
11. Sestetto	B-flat M
12. Dialogo delle due Regine	DM
13. Stretta finale	DM
-Act III-	
14. Scena e duettino (Elisabetta/Cecil)	E-flat M; B-flat M
15. Terzetto (Elisabetta/Leicester/Cecil)	E-flat M
16. Scena	
17. Duetto della confessione (Maria/Talbot)	GM
18. Inno della morte (Chorus)	Em; EM
19. Preghiera degli scozzesi (Maria)	Fm; FM; Bm; DM; E-flat M
20. Aria del supplizio (Maria)	Fm; FM; Bm; DM

Maria Stuarda is divided into three acts. In Act I, Leicester arranges the meeting of the two queens. During Act II, the confrontation of the two queens takes place. The third act builds to Maria's execution. Maria, Elisabetta, and Leicester have the solo numbers: Maria with three (Nos. 8, 19, 20), Elisabetta with one (No. 4), and Leicester with one (No. 6). Minor characters Cecil and Talbot participate in ensembles. In addition, Cecil sings a duet with Elisabetta

(No. 14) and the Trio (No. 15), and Talbot has a duet with Maria (No. 17). The high dramatic points are contained in some of the ensembles. Leicester persuades the queens to meet in his duets with Elisabetta (No. 7) and Maria (No. 9). Elisabetta decides to have Maria executed in the duet with Cecil (No. 14) and the following trio (No. 15). The Sestetto (No. 11) is anticipatory to the great Dialogue of the two queens (No. 12). At a glance, the list of formal numbers shows that the dramatic action is rather slow in the first two acts, considering the highly dramatic ensembles are few.

#### Musical Numbers

Overture (No. 1). Originally, Donizetti used an earlier prelude for Buodelmonte, leaving Maria Stuarda without an overture until the 1835 Milan production, when he received payment for its composition. The movement opens with a short Allegro theme, followed by a Lento introductory theme. The Allegro theme is then used as the first theme, with a lengthy closing section before the second theme, which is Maria's cabaletta theme from Act II (No. 8). After the brief statement of theme two, Donizetti closes with the crescendo theme, not yet reaching its full climax. The return of the first theme acts as a quasi-development, followed by the return of the second theme and the crescendo theme. Instead of combining various melodies from the opera to form the overture, as was a trend of this time, Donizetti uses one cabaletta theme as a heroic second theme in the altered sonata form of the Overture.

Preludio (No. 2). The short Preludio sets the scene for the first act, with its clarinet solo which performs a recitative solo to promote the ensuing sadness in C minor.

Coro (No. 3). This ABA movement sounds unusually gay in light of the opera's story. The chorus awaits Elisabetta with excitement. The orchestra gives the effect of performing as an on-stage band, as Verdi would later use.

Scena e cavatina (No. 4). In Elisabetta's opening recitative, "trono" ("throne") is ornamented as she describes what the King of France wants of her. The ornamentation suggests her endearment for the throne as she takes the time to ponder. Stately chords played with regal dotted rhythms announce Elisabetta's long aria, which is in ABA form. Each section ends with a generous cadenza. The tempo di mezzo consists of two similar ariosos. Talbot sings the first arioso, and Elisabetta sings the second. The chorus interjects sympathetic phrases concerning Maria, while Cecil suggests her execution. The cabaletta is conventional in form, with a full introduction and two exact statements of the theme.

Scena (No. 5). This recitative/arioso number introduces Leicester, as he is proclaimed emissary to France. The interesting characteristic of Donizetti's ariosos throughout Maria Stuarda is the use of repeated motives. The Scena opens with a six-chord motive. As Elisabetta sings, a chord is sustained. During her rests, the six-chord motive is repeated in a new key. The motive recurs throughout this number and the arioso portion of the next. Donizetti often uses

a particular motive until the mood changes, in his arioso sections, when not using it this extensively.

Scena e cavatina (No. 6). Talbot begins the accompanied recitative with declaimed lines on g, stating that Maria sent a picture and letter to Leicester. In his aria, Leicester emphasizes "saprò sfidar" ("for her sake") by repeating it on high g' with sustained notes, as the orchestra crescendos and thickens in texture. Leicester's cabaletta is in conventional form, with an added dramatic touch. As his thoughts change from sadness to hope, the mode seems to change from minor to major. Donizetti achieves this by emphasizing the fifth of the scale and using inverted chords during the first half of the theme. The second half heroically moves to the dominant in root position, resulting in a strong major sound. The dramatic line "sì del fato mio" ("to my fate") is accented on high a', to stress Leicester's emotion. Talbot joins at the additional cadences at the end of the reprise.

Scena e duetto (No. 7). During the recitative/arioso, Elisabetta reveals her suspicion of Talbot when she sings "sospetto ei mi divenne" ("he has become suspect") unaccompanied, on a single pitch. As Elisabetta's agitation grows, the accompaniment becomes more frantic, with short, uneven phrases. Leicester describes Maria in a lyric aria, which also seems to change modes. While Elisabetta supposedly agrees with his description in her own aria, the music exposes that she does not believe what she sings. Disjunct and awkward phrases undermine her text.

Elisabetta's true feelings are verbalized in the tempo di mezzo. Her strong phrases and cadences express her firm stand as well as her

peremptory anger. The first statement of the cabaletta is sung by Elisabetta; her powerful melody building upward to climaxes. Leicester's statement is a weaker, more sentimental melody and is interrupted by Elisabetta's interjections of "taci" ("silent"). Elisabetta and Leicester sing her melody at the reprise, suggesting her dominance.

Scena e cavatina (No. 8). The impatience and anxiety of Maria are heard in the running triplets in the orchestra. This long introduction to Act II is followed by Maria's recitative. Her line which translates "how dear the pleasure that surrounds me" is set with particular care. The first phrase, stressing pleasure, is marked *Presto* and ascends rapidly, representing her enjoyment of pleasure. After an eighth rest, the second part of the line descends, marked *Lento*, as if she were reminded of her surrounding imprisonment. A complete introduction played by the woodwinds then begins her beautiful aria. Donizetti writes three verses; the last two begin as the first and expand. In this aria, Donizetti composes one of the nicest melodies in the opera:

*Larghetto*

Oh su-be! che lieve per l'a-ria ..ti ag--gi--ri, tu re--ca il mio

*affetto* tu re-ca so-spi--ri

The expressive range is from high a"-flat to low a-flat.



The sound of hunting horns opens the tempo di mezzo, when Maria becomes irritated that Elisabetta will soon arrive. The fiery cabaletta begins like a fanfare, outlining a B-flat major chord:



The large leaps from the accentuated F continue throughout the cabaletta, representing Maria's strength and uneasiness. The reprise is exact and initiated by a weak arioso section where Anna tries to persuade Maria to avoid Elisabetta by leaving.

Scena e duetto (No. 9). A sixteenth-note figure introduces the recitative and later accompanies Maria's aria. Her strong opposition to be submissive to Elisabetta is heard forte on high e"-flat as a whole note leaping down an octave. Donizetti sets the first verse of the aria for Maria and the second for Leicester, as Maria interjects. The third verse is sung tutti. Maria's sadness and pain are felt in her opening line "da tutti abbandonata" ("forsaken by everyone"):



Maria sings the first statement of the cabaletta; Leicester sings the second. Both seem united as they alternate phrases in the reprise.

Scena (No. 10). A repeated chord played as triplets supplies accompaniment for much of this number. As Maria is expected to

approach Elisabetta, an Allegro section begins, building to her "oh Dio!" ("oh God!"). After the two queens' eyes meet, silence is secured by a fermata over a rest.

Sestetto (No. 11). Immediately Elisabetta starts the sestetto, accompanied by the triplet figure. Each character enters after her complete statement of the theme. Cecil's repetitions of "di eterno dolor" ("with eternal pain") are sung staccato during the final sustained chord of the others.

Dialogo delle due Regine (No. 12). This confrontation contains the most drama of the opera. Donizetti effectively sets the number as alternating sections of recitative, accompanied recitative, and arioso, to keep dramatic momentum. After lengthy accompanied sections, the recitatives stand out almost as spoken dialogue. Although the scene flows continuously, a subdivision of its sections provides a basis for examination of the dramatic continuity:


Allegro	Recitative	Leicester, Elisabetta, Talbot, Maria
	Arioso	Maria (Cecil comments at cadences)
	Recitative	Elisabetta, Maria
Più Allegro	Arioso	Elisabetta (Maria, Leicester, Cecil at cadences)
	Arioso	Leicester
	Accompanied Recitative	Leicester, Elisabetta
In Tempo	Arioso	Elisabetta, Maria
	Accompanied Recitative	Maria
Più Allegro	Arioso	All

During the opening recitative, Leicester prevails upon Elisabetta to recognize Maria. Maria humbly kneels before Elisabetta and asks for pity in her arioso. The orchestra accompanies with a happy motive,

suggesting the superficial attitudes of the queens. Maria's final repetitions of "omai ti basti" ("now be satisfied") become more insistent, as they are short and rise in pitch. Cecil enters with a slow ascending chromatic line to warn Elisabetta not to listen.

One beat after Maria ends, Elisabetta enters on the same note to insult Maria. Elisabetta's insults continue in her arioso to the same accompaniment as Maria's. During the cadences, Maria worries she cannot restrain her anger, and Leicester tries to calm her. Cecil repeats his chromatic statements.

Leicester asks Maria to control herself in his arioso, and Elisabetta takes notice. In accompanied recitative, Elisabetta then hurls insults at Leicester. Maria's anger festers in the following arioso, and, at a complete rhythmic halt, sings "qual insulto!" ("what an insult!"). As Maria delivers her lines, the orchestra accompanies with tremolo strings and sweeping scales after each phrase. Each insult moves higher in pitch to the declaimed "profonato è il soglio inglese, vil bastarda, da tuo piè!" ("the English throne is sullied, vile bastard, by your foot!"). As Maria finishes, the Piu Allegro begins, where Elisabetta sends for the guards and the chorus comments that Maria is surely lost.

Stretta finale (No. 13). The finale begins immediately, so as not to lose the dramatic intensity. Elisabetta starts the theme, with the driving  rhythm. As everyone joins, Maria and Leicester are heard as they share a melody in octaves. As Maria is surrounded by guards, she and Leicester begin the reprise.

Scena e duettino (No. 14). Unfortunately, this weak number follows the exciting confrontation scene and opens Act III. Again, the inherent problem is the libretto. It makes little sense for Elisabetta to have second thoughts about signing Maria's execution document, after the degrading confrontation. Donizetti must have realized the superfluous nature of this scene, because the music, although melodious, is uneventful, routine, and conventional.

An excellent example of the lack of revision appears in Elisabetta's aria of the Duettino. Sequenced phrases are repeated exactly, without the rhythmic or melodic variants:



Terzetto (No. 15). Donizetti's suggestion that the Trio be replaced with a recitative explains his attitude towards this number. An interesting aspect is the repetition of a melody from an earlier number. Leicester quotes, in his aria, the melody Maria sings at the Larghetto in their duet (No. 7). Perhaps Donizetti forgot that he had included this melody in the opera, or he simply favored it greatly. Elisabetta repeats the aria Leicester sings, but with variation. During the tempo di mezzo, Elisabetta declaims "dorrà perir l'amante dopo il fatale istante" ("your lover must die after that fatal moment") on c" for three measures. Later, she leaps from c"-flat down to d, as she sings "è morto ogni pietà" ("every hope of mercy is dead"). In the



Preghiera degli scozzesi (No. 19). Maria enters and asks the chorus to join her in a prayer. This prayer is a simple melody, repeated many times. Donizetti alters each repetition to avoid monotony. The first verse is sung by Maria alone. The chorus sings the next verse, while Maria sings additional supplications. This verse is extended to include some solo phrases for Maria. In the following verse, Maria sings a touching inverted pedal point *pianissimo* on high *g*", which ascends and climaxes on *b*"-flat. As the prayer comes to an end, cannon shots boldly remind Maria of the ensuing execution.

Aria del supplizio (No. 20). Cecil enters to grant Maria's final wishes. In an aria, Maria forgives all who have wronged her. At the repeat of the aria, the chorus and Talbot join. Particularly dramatic are Maria's octave leaps on the words "*tutto col sangue*" ("with my blood"), before she performs elaborate cadenzas over the chorus. Leicester arrives at the *tempo di mezzo* and declaims a line that translates "all of you fear a God who avenges innocence!" as the second cannon shot is fired. Maria begins the cabaletta, which lacks the usual bravura passages of most Donizetti cabalettas. A fine addition is the reprise that begins in *B* major instead of *B* minor. A chromatic climb precedes the final cadence, as Maria walks to the block.

## ROBERTO DEVEREUX

### Historical Background

"When Beverly Sills first sang at the New York State Theater on 15 October 1970, Roberto Devereux became for a time the 'hottest ticket on Broadway,'" observes Ashbrook.<sup>19</sup> The New York City Opera's revival of the Tudor Queen Trilogy took place during the increasing excitement for Donizetti's music in the United States. From its first performance in 1837 to the present, Roberto Devereux has always thrilled audiences. This opera represents Donizetti's fully mature style near the height of his career. Gossett explains:

By 1837 Donizetti's place as the foremost active composer of Italian opera was certain. Rossini had written nothing since 1829; Bellini was dead; Mercadante and Pacini, though respected craftsmen, did not share Donizetti's genius.<sup>20</sup>

Roberto Devereux was contracted in 1837 by Barbaja for the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. The opera was one of the last Donizetti wrote for the Italian stage and one of the first he prepared for production in Paris after his return in 1838. Little is known of when Donizetti began composing the music for Roberto Devereux. A vague reference in a letter dating April 1837 is a possible mention of the opera. The subject was chosen and libretto under way presumably by late May, because Donizetti had begun composing by mid-July.<sup>21</sup>

The librettist, Salvatore Cammarano (1801-1852), had a vast theatrical background and was one of the most prominent librettists of his time. Cammarano went on to work with Verdi on some of his early operas. Donizetti considered Cammarano second only to Romani, but he enjoyed working with Cammarano better. While working on Roberto Devereux, Donizetti sent Cammarano this note:

I shall wait for you in the Two Sicilies Café until two o'clock...The finale strikes me as not too bad. We will read it together: four eyes are better than two, or rather eight--counting my glasses and your two eyes which are equal to four.<sup>22</sup>

The situation in and around Naples in 1837 was gloomy, as the cholera epidemic destroyed many lives. Donizetti's wife, Virginia, fell victim to the disease in June and lost their third infant. After a long struggle with the disease, Virginia died 30 July. During this emotional crisis, Donizetti composed Roberto Devereux. He seemed to work out his devastation through the score. In a letter dated 4 September 1837, he wrote, "In a few days I begin rehearsals. For me this will be the opera of my emotions, but I have no eagerness to begin the exertions when I at every page..."<sup>23</sup> The letter is left unfinished.

Rehearsals for the opera were delayed for no apparent reason. Donizetti worried that there was censorship trouble, as with many previous scores, but it is assumed the theater remained closed because of the cholera epidemic. Rehearsals finally commenced for the opening on 28 October. The opera scored great success and remained popular for forty years. Donizetti prepared Roberto Devereux for its Parisian premiere in 1838, and it was later performed in New York in 1849.



Naples revived the opera in 1964, bringing it back into the repertoire.

The factors that make Roberto Devereux one of Donizetti's finest operas are the well-constructed libretto and the masterfully composed score. Cammarano chose two sources for his libretto: Romani's text for Mercadante's Il Conte d'Essex (1833) and Ancelot's play Elisabeth d'Angleterre (1829). By 1833, it was customary to set operas in three acts, as Romani did. Cammarano originally conceived Roberto Devereux in two acts.<sup>24</sup> The decision to convert to three acts must have been late, because Donizetti's autograph originally suggested a two-act opera. Gossett feels the three-act version is not very satisfying, and discovered that many theaters of the time presented it in two-act form by combining the first two acts.<sup>25</sup> Whether in two or three acts, Roberto Devereux is well-paced and clearly motivated.

Donizetti's autograph reveals the ease with which he composed Roberto Devereux. It contains few revisions and is considered one of his cleaner manuscripts. It is evident that Donizetti knew his craft well by 1837, in light of the personal tragedies surrounding the composition. The only major revisions involve the choral finale to Act II and Roberto's cabaletta theme in his duet with Elisabetta. The autograph shows confusion as to whether Cecil is a tenor or Raleigh is a bass; Act I lists them correctly, while the parts are exchanged in Act II. This discrepancy is probably due to Donizetti's bad memory. He recast some lines and simply signified to exchange parts in one situation.

The cast of characters in Roberto Devereux:

Elisabetta, Queen of England	Soprano
Nottingham, Duke of	Baritone
Sara, Duchess of Nottingham	Mezzo-soprano
Roberto Devereux, Earl of Essex	Tenor
Lord Cecil	Tenor
Sir Walter Raleigh	Bass
A Page	Bass
A Servant of Nottingham	Bass
Ladies of the Royal Court, Courtiers, Pages, Royal guards, Attendants of Nottingham.	

The Earl of Harewood provides a concise synopsis of Roberto

Devereux in Kobbe's Opera Book:

Sarah [Sara]...pines with love for Robert [Roberto] ...and cannot hide her tears from the other ladies of the Court...The Queen enters and reveals to Sara that she has consented to see Essex without whom her life has no meaning and whom she suspects, not of the treason of which he is accused but of infidelity to her...Cecil comes to demand the Queen's approval of his Peers' judgement on Essex, but she asks for further proof of treason and says she will see him...Essex proclaims his fidelity to the Sovereign...she refers to the ring she once gave him and which he has only to produce for her to guarantee his safety...[Roberto] forgets himself as to fancy for a moment that the Queen knows of his secret passion for Sarah. No amount of protestation can allay the suspicion he has created and the unhappy Essex is left alone to lament the turn fate has taken against him. His friend Nottingham, come to assure him of his support in the Council, reveals...that his wife Sarah, a prey to grief and weeping, has even aroused his own jealous suspicions. Cecil summons Nottingham to the Council, and he goes reiterating his devotion to Essex...To Sarah's apartments in the Nottingham House, Essex comes to upbraid her that she married another and to bid her farewell. She pleads that her father's sudden death while Essex was abroad precipitated her into a loveless marriage and urges him to turn towards the Queen. Protesting that his heart is dead to love, he tears the Queen's ring from his finger and throws it on the table...Sarah gives him a blue scarf she has embroidered and he wears it near his heart.

The Hall at the Palace of Westminster...Lords and Ladies of the Court brood on Essex's likely fate; without the Queen's aid, he is lost--and her present mood suggests this will not be forthcoming. Cecil enters to tell the Queen that the Council, in spite of Nottingham's defence of his friend, has brought in a sentence of death, which now awaits only her approval...Raleigh comes to tell Elizabeth that when Essex was arrested and searched a silk scarf was found next to his heart. No sooner has the Queen recognized it as Lady Nottingham's than Nottingham himself comes in to plead...for Essex's life. Essex himself is brought in...and the Queen confronts him with the scarf...Nottingham, too, recognizes the scarf and calls down the vengeance of Heaven on his faithless friend...all voices join for their different reasons in condemning Essex's treachery.

...Sarah...receives news of Essex's condemnation, plans immediately to take the ring Essex has left with her to the Queen...only to look up into the unforgiving eyes of her husband...he denounces Essex and...makes clear his intention of preventing her conveying the ring to the Queen...Essex waits for news of the pardon which he believes will certainly follow delivery of the ring to the Queen. He pictures offering himself to the sword of Nottingham and with his dying breath assuring his friend that Sarah has remained chaste in spite of all temptation...the anticipated pardon does not arrive...The last scene shows the Queen in the Great Hall surrounded by her ladies and anxiously awaiting the arrival of the trusted Sarah to comfort her, as well as sight of the ring which she believes Essex will send her...the sight of Sarah bringing the ring...does not sway her from her purpose. She orders a stay of execution at the very moment when a cannon is heard giving the signal to the headsman. The Queen turns in misery to blame Sarah until Nottingham himself reveals his guilt in preventing the ring reaching the Queen...Elizabeth, beside herself with grief, sees visions of the Crown bathed in blood, of a man running through the Palace corridors carrying his own head, of a tomb opening for her where once stood her throne.<sup>26</sup>

The formal numbers of Roberto Devereux:

1. Overture	Dm; DM
-Act I-	
2. Preludio (Chorus)	GM
3. Romanza (Sara)	GM
4. Scena e cavatina (Elisabetta)	B-flat M; GM
5. Scena e duetto (Elisabetta/Roberto)	DM
6. Scena e cavatina (Nottingham)	FM
7. Scena e duetto (Sara/Roberto)	E-flat M
-Act II-	
8. Coro	EM
9. Scena	
10. Duettino (Elisabetta/Nottingham)	FM
11. Terzetto (Elisabetta/Roberto/Nottingham)	AM
-Act III-	
12. Scena e duetto (Sara/Nottingham)	E-flat M
13. Scena ed aria (Roberto)	AM
14. Aria finale (Elisabetta)	DM

Although Elisabetta is the primary character of Roberto Devereux, the other main characters are of equal importance to the plot. Donizetti writes cabalettas for each of the main characters and further balances the opera with duets that develop the various relationships within it; Elisabetta/Roberto (No. 5), Roberto/Sara (No. 7), and Sara/Nottingham (No. 12). A duettino is included for Elisabetta and Nottingham (No. 10). While the music is consistently attractive, the Trio (No. 11) and Aria finale (No. 14) include the highest dramatic points. Donizetti sets them accordingly with the most dramatic music.

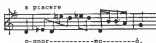
Musical Numbers

Overture (No. 1). The Overture was composed for the performance at the Théâtre-Italien in 1838. The form follows the Rossinian design and incorporates melodies from the score as well as "God save the

Queen." The long Larghetto introduction utilizes some variants of "God save the Queen," followed by the first theme and its lengthy closing section. Roberto's cabaletta (No. 13) is used as the second theme, which is succeeded by the earlier closing theme. The first theme returns, now in D major. The crescendo theme and recapitulation of the second theme are in D major also.

Preludio (No. 2). After the orchestra plays an expository melody, it repeats the melody as the chorus converses, occasionally singing portions of the tune. Sara enters with some recitative lines which lead into her Romanza (No. 3). The Preludio concludes with a seventh chord as Sara holds "ah."

Romanza (No. 3). The Romanza begins with a full introduction. Sara's sadness is heard in her descending line from high g" to low b at her line "anche il pianto mi vieto" ("even forbids me to weep"), describing her ill-fated star. Donizetti includes wide intervals to express her emotion further. A repeat of "morrò" ("death") exploits her dramatic and dark low voice on half notes, and the final cadence employs a sorrowful chromaticism:



Scena e cavatina (No. 4). Elisabetta opens with recitative after a stately introduction. Strings accompany tremolo when she ponders the arrival of Roberto, revealing her feelings for him at his first mention. When Elisabetta later describes her vengeance, she sings a

sweeping scale from g' upward to high a", then downward to middle c'. The range of her anger is explored on a single word, "vendetta" ("vengeance"). The following aria is beautifully expressive, with a minor mode effect and lyric melody. The coloratura is purely dramatic, allowing the performer freedom at rallentandos. The contrast of character in Elisabetta is nicely achieved: from a vengeful and powerful monarch in the arioso to a woman moved by love in the aria.

In the tempo di mezzo, Cecil comes in to announce that Elisabetta needs only to approve the Council's decision of treason on Roberto; his arioso lines are primarily declaimed on a single pitch. Elisabetta replies that she will decide at her convenience in recitative, marked *Marcato*. The recitative is declaimed on high e"-flat, exhibiting more authority over Cecil. At word that Roberto will soon arrive, Elisabetta begins her cabaletta, which reflects her excitement with a major mode, frequent leaps upward, and a two-octave chromatic climb to the final cadences. The chorus comments between statements, then Elisabetta enters with a cadenza on "vieni" ("come"), which leads into her reprise.

Scena e duetto (No. 5). Essex enters, and Elisabetta sends everyone out in order to be alone with him. Her passion and vulnerability are sensed in the warm music played by the strings:





As Roberto mentions his involvement in the army, he sings a heroic arioso. Elisabetta repeats the arioso when she speaks of her warriors. Later, she points out the ring she gave Roberto, explaining its power on a declaimed d". As Elisabetta reaches the cadence in her tender aria that follows, Roberto starts his verse on her final note. Elisabetta becomes agitated that he will not pronounce love to her, and interrupts the legato aria with two measures of recitative, accompanied only by fortissimo struck chords.

During the course of the tempo di mezzo, Elisabetta tries to get Roberto to admit his unfaithfulness to her. His denials anger her, and this anger mounts at the recitative lines which encompass high a" to low d', "oh mia vendetta! e non ami? bada! non ami?" ("oh my vengeance! Aren't you in love? Beware! Aren't you in love?"). Roberto quietly answers "io? no" ("I? no"), sending her into the frenzied cabaletta, where her anger is set loose:

Vivace e staccato

un lampo un lampo or--ri--bi-----le agli oc-----chi

mie splen-de---a.....no del mio sde-gno vin-di-----ce fug-

gi---re non può... la re-----a

As Elisabetta's statement comes to a close with a chromatic fall, Roberto interrupts at the cadence with a new theme, suggesting his romantic grief and weakness:

nas-con--di fre--na i pal-pi-ti

Elisabetta asks Roberto her question once again, which sends him into the reprise. She joins, singing his melody at the octave, showing her resignation to him.

Scena e cavatina (No. 6). After Elisabetta sweeps out, Nottingham appears and explains his worry for Sara in his sentimental aria. Cecil enters in the tempo di mezzo to proclaim that the Council meet to discuss a death sentence. Nottingham's cabaletta describes his faithful



friendship to Roberto. A short cadenza separates the first statement and reprise. Nottingham's high f's in the cadences emphasize his prayer to keep Roberto safe.

Scena e dueto (No. 7). The woodwinds and strings play separate introductory melodies before Sara's entrance. Her recitative climaxes at the phrase "è desso" ("it is he") on high a". As the orchestra repeats the introductory woodwind melody, Roberto arrives and sings an arioso. When Roberto thinks that Sara's love for him has faltered, the strings accompany tremolo, as he sings "ah! no creda cangiato tanto di Sara cor" ("ah! I had not believed that Sara's heart had changed"), to build tension and motivate Sara's ensuing aria. Roberto sings the second verse of the aria as Sara interjects short phrases. The two decide to part during the tempo di mezzo, and both sing the cabaletta together. (Reminiscent of the duet of the Duke and Gilda in Rigoletto.)

Coro (No. 8). The customary chorus opens Act II after a brief orchestral introduction. Over a melody played by the orchestra, the men discuss Roberto's fate. The women join during a cadential extension, and all sing the orchestra's melody in its next statement.

Scena (No. 9). In the short scena, Elisabetta learns the Council has sentenced Roberto to death. She sends everyone out but Raleigh and Cecil, as the orchestra repeats the melody from the preceding chorus.

Duettino (No. 10). In the course of the arioso, Elisabetta is told of the scarf that Roberto clung to during his arrest. Nottingham then enters and laments, in an arioso, for Roberto. Elisabetta informs

Nottingham of Roberto's betrayal, but Nottingham's denials climax at "credi" ("believe [me]") that begins on high e' and descends a tenth to c. He then insists "ascolta" ("listen") on d', leaping down to e and slowly ascending into his aria melody. Elisabetta, not affected by his pleas, interrupts his final cadence with "taci, pieta de o grazia" ("Silence. Mercy or pardon no"). The orchestra reflects her scolding with a new rhythmic accompaniment, contrasting greatly to Nottingham's legato aria:



Later, Elisabetta emphasizes her repeated phrase "Il tradimento è," which translates "The betrayal is dreadful, his faithlessness is certain" with coloratura that is anything but sweet:



As the duet ends, Elisabetta once again shows fury in the rapidly descending "mercè" ("mercy") from high a" to middle c'. Nottingham is clearly defeated.

Terzetto (No. 11). As Roberto is lead in by guards, Elisabetta prepares to set free her vengeance on him during her recitative. The orchestra supports her frantic anger with a steady eighty-note accompaniment as she sings what translates as "unfaithful man, villainous man":




Nottingham recognizes the scarf as Elisabetta confronts Roberto with it, and expresses his dismay over tremolo chords. The following Trio consists of a statement by Elisabetta and a duet-like statement by Roberto and Nottingham.

In the tempo di mezzo, Nottingham's emotion changes from pain to anger, as he sings "Scellerato! Malvaggio!" ("Criminal! Evil-doer!") in octaves with the orchestra. He calls for a sword during a brief arioso section, followed by Elisabetta's cursing in another arioso section. Unaccompanied, she finally repeats "parla!" ("speak!") at Roberto, but he prefers death. The orchestra plays rapid scale figures which slowly ascend as Elisabetta signs the death sentence. She then declaims on held e"'s that Roberto will be executed at the signal of the cannon when the sun sets that day.

Elisabetta's anger is unleashed in the following cabaletta, as Ashbrook says, "This hard-driving melody with its wide intervals and emphatic declamation shows Donizetti moving beyond the decorative expression of rage in roulades to the naked emotion itself";<sup>27</sup>



Although the reprise is the same, Donizetti adds the touch of beginning in F-sharp major, as opposed to the original F-sharp minor mode.

Scena e duetto (No. 12). Donizetti repeats two previous themes in this duet as reminiscent motives. As Sara awaits Roberto, the music from their duet (No. 7) accompanies. As Nottingham arrives, angry and hurt, his cabaletta theme (No. 6) is heard. These recurrences are particularly striking when the situations of the earlier numbers are considered. In the duet (No. 7), Sara wants Roberto to leave her, yet now she waits impatiently for him. Nottingham's cabaletta (No. 6) describes his faithful friendship to the unfaithful Roberto. Nottingham's rage is intensified as he outlines a diminished seventh chord in half notes while he sings "vo' sangue!" ("[I] want blood!"), climaxing to high *f'*. The following cabaletta utilizes the driving  rhythm.

Scena ed aria (No. 13). The harmony and rhythm of the opening chords, played by the low brass, represent the typical nineteenth-century tragic motive:



The aria Donizetti writes for Roberto contains romantic pathos, primarily by means of a chromatic melody and alternating A major/C-sharp minor harmony. The cabaletta is in conventional form.

Aria finale (No. 14). Donizetti creates an extremely dramatic scene without the additional arias or extended cabalettas he uses in the other operas under examination. After a short recitative, an arioso section begins, as Elisabetta sings "Io sono donna alfine. Il foco è spento del mio furor." ("At last I am just a woman. The fire of my wrath is out.") Another recitative section starts. Elisabetta notices the time passing, as the orchestra accompanies tremolo. As she imagines Roberto approaching the block, she sings "arresta!" ("stop!") over three measures, sustaining high a". In her long, touching aria, she forgives Roberto for his infidelity.

Donizetti paints an emotional picture in this aria above all others in this study. At Elisabetta's repetitions of "sospirar in eterno" ("forever to sigh"), her grief is expressed in the lyric line and dramatic leaps:



At every repetition of "abbandona" ("abandon"), the syllable "do" is effectively elongated, reaching this beautiful chromatic sigh:



Her emotion is reinforced again by the extreme range of the final cadenza:



Sara rushes in during the tempo di mezzo with the ring. Tremolos and ascending jagged motives on the upbeats accompany her entrance. After Elisabetta sends a courtier to stop the execution, the cannon blasts are heard. Elisabetta, convulsed with rage and anguish, begins the cabaletta, marked *Larghetto Maestoso*. Her powerful statements climax on high b<sup>2</sup> as she sings what translates as "At your final moment turn to God, perhaps he will be able to pardon you." As she repeats the phrase, the tempo changes to *Allegro* for the final cadences:



In a brief arioso, the courtiers attempt to calm the Queen, who then begins the reprise with a new verse.

## CONCLUSION

Donizetti's music must be considered within the limits of its time. What brings Donizetti from the obscurity of numerous opera composers and the strong conventions of the time is his dramatic style. Donizetti originally wanted reform, yet he conformed to the conventions and developed his own style within them. As Ashbrook states:

A fair estimate of Donizetti's qualities can only be achieved by considering his music in the context of the theater within which he worked, its musical conventions, and its personnel of singers and other composers, all of whom were struggling to capture and maintain the loyalty of the public.<sup>28</sup>

Examining the three opera serias, Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, and Roberto Devereux, reveals some of the methods Donizetti developed to give his operas dramatic strength. The overall structure of scenes and many individual characteristics of Donizetti's are seen in different uses in these three scores.

Early in his career, Donizetti expressed the need to reform opera. As Marco Bonesi, a friend of Donizetti's, is quoted in Ashbrooks book:

...[Donizetti] had many ideas how to reform the predictable situations, the sequences of introduction, cavatina, duet, trio, finale, always fashioned the same way. 'But,' he added sadly, 'what to do with the blessed theatrical conventions? Impresarios, singers, and the public as well, would hurl me into the farthest pit at least, and--addio per sempre.'<sup>29</sup>

Donizetti eventually changed some aspects of the convention, but, more importantly, learned to work within the set forms. The first scene of Anna Bolena includes an added Romanza for another character. The confrontation scene in Maria Stuarda is a long string of ariosos, recitatives, arias, and a final sextet in cabaletta form. Maria Stuarda's finale includes an extra aria with chorus. These alterations remain similar to the set form, but result in much more dramatically-paced scenes.

Donizetti's treatment of recitatives and ariosos changes somewhat from each opera to the next. In Anna Bolena, he most often places recitatives first, followed by ariosos. Both styles are mixed throughout Maria Stuarda and are often similar in treatment. The alternations provide change in dramatic turns. Donizetti makes clearer the distinction between recitative and arioso in Roberto Devereux, but passes from one to the other freely. In all three operas, the text is set carefully to tell the action with more excitement.

The action stops during arias and cabalettas. Donizetti's arias in Anna Bolena and Roberto Devereux are usually short, with exceptions of longer arias in the finales. Maria Stuarda includes extra arias in many of its numbers, which contribute to the rather slow-moving action. By 1837 in Roberto Devereux, Donizetti refines his arias with many rallentandos, tenutos, and free cadenza sections.

Donizetti often struggled with the cabaletta form. Obviously conceived for solo technical display, the cabaletta held up the drama. Donizetti, realizing the trouble lay in the reprise, often tried to



work out a motivation for the reprise or simply left it out. In addition to dramatic motivation, Donizetti includes musical devices to give reprises more emotional impact: ornamented melodic lines, change of mode, or change of text. Cabalettas of duets are almost always treated differently. Depending on the dramatic situation, these cabalettas may include individual melodies for each voice, exchanges of phrases between voices, or voices in octaves.

Donizetti developed many expressive devices for a more dramatic effect. Diatonic chromaticism, melodic variation, the major-minor mode alternation, recurring and reminiscent motives are utilized in dramatic fashion. Three great musical characteristics of the nineteenth century are used differently in the three operas: virtuosic vocal writing, declamation of text, and musical continuity.

Rossini established the highly virtuosic melodies that singers and audiences demanded. In the hands of Donizetti, coloratura lines are used for expressive purposes as well as pyrotechnical display for singers. Anna Bolena looks back to Rossini, with more florid melodies and coloratura writing for both men and women. By Maria Stuarda in 1835, Donizetti almost eliminates flourishes for the men, reserving them primarily for cadential points. In Roberto Devereux, rapid figurations are purely expressive. Interestingly, trills are included only in Anna Bolena--for all voices.

Declamatory lines are a trademark of Verdi, but Donizetti's influence is in part responsible. The development is evident up to Verdi's mastery of the style. Declaimed lines in Anna Bolena are very few and usually restricted to ariosos. Donizetti utilizes

declamation in Maria Stuarda almost too frequently, without distinction. The declamatory phrases in Roberto Devereux appear in recitatives, ariosos, tempo di mezzos, and occasionally arias, wherever necessary for dramatic effect.

The topic of musical continuity is rarely raised when considering bel canto opera, but some incipit characteristics are discernible in Donizetti's long scenes. Changes in tempo, alternation between recitative, arioso, accompanied recitative, and new dramatic situations all supply continuous qualities to the opening scene of Anna Bolena, the confrontation and final scenes in Maria Stuarda, and the Trio and finale of Roberto Devereux.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of Donizetti's operas is the performer. The style in which these works were written is purely vocal; the singer must interpret the music and make necessary alterations to fit their particular voice for the most expressive performance. (Did not Donizetti do the same?) Conductors, orchestra members, and soloists must appreciate and understand the style and intentions of Donizetti to create the dramatic atmosphere he strove to achieve.

# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>H. Sutherland Edwards, with additions by Ferruccio Bonavia and Frank Walker, "Gaetano Donizetti," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Fifth Edition, edited by Eric Blom, 1955), II, p. 734.
- <sup>2</sup>William Ashbrook, Donizetti and His Operas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 207.
- <sup>3</sup>Ashbrook, pp. 671-2.
- <sup>4</sup>Philip Gossett, Anna Bolena and the Artistic Maturity of Gaetano Donizetti (England: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 183.
- <sup>5</sup>Ashbrook, pp. 671-2.
- <sup>6</sup>Ashbrook, p. 210.
- <sup>7</sup>Winton Dean, "Donizetti and Queen Elizabeth," Opera, IV (1953), p. 333.
- <sup>8</sup>Gary Schmidgall, Literature as Opera (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 119.
- <sup>9</sup>Herbert Weinstock, Donizetti and the World of Opera in Italy, Paris, and Vienna in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), p. vii.
- <sup>10</sup>Julian Marshall, "Giuditta Pasta," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Fifth Edition, edited by Eric Blom, 1955), VI, p. 588.
- <sup>11</sup>Ashbrook, p. 317.
- <sup>12</sup>Ashbrook, p. 618.
- <sup>13</sup>The Earl of Harewood, Kobbe's Opera Book (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1987), pp. 356-8.
- <sup>14</sup>Ashbrook, pp. 103-4.
- <sup>15</sup>Schmidgall, p. 129.
- <sup>16</sup>Schmidgall, p. 120.

- <sup>17</sup>Louis Wernick, "Postscript on Maria Stuarda," Journal of the Donizetti Society, 1980, pp. 248-9.
- <sup>18</sup>The Earl of Harewood, pp. 364-6.
- <sup>19</sup>Ashbrook, p. 123.
- <sup>20</sup>Gaetano Donizetti, Roberto Devereux, Facsimile of autograph score, edited with introduction by Philip Gossett (New York: Garland Pub., 1982), p. i.
- <sup>21</sup>Ashbrook, p. 120.
- <sup>22</sup>Ashbrook, p. 623.
- <sup>23</sup>Ashbrook, p. 122.
- <sup>24</sup>John Black, "Elisabeth D'Angleterre, Il Conte D'Essex, Roberto Devereux," Journal of the Donizetti Society, 1981, p. 136.
- <sup>25</sup>Gaetano Donizetti, p. iii.
- <sup>26</sup>The Earl of Harewood, pp. 374-5.
- <sup>27</sup>Ashbrook, p. 405.
- <sup>28</sup>Ashbrook, p. 207.
- <sup>29</sup>Ashbrook, p. 19.

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ANNA BOLENA, MARIA STUARDA, AND ROBERTO DEVEREUX:

A STUDY OF GAETANO DONIZETTI'S DRAMATIC STYLE

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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Italian opera composers of the early nineteenth century were often limited by highly conventionalized compositional formulas. The composer of bel canto style who emerges as creating a dramatic style within the limits of convention is Gaetano Donizetti. Donizetti's dramatic elements are evident in three of his serious operas: Anna Bolena (1830), Maria Stuarda (1835), and Roberto Devereux (1837). This report begins with a description of Donizetti's career and the operatic world in which he worked. Following are examinations of Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, and Roberto Devereux, including the historical background, synopsis, and brief analysis of each opera. Special attention is paid to Donizetti's dramatic elements.